

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, January 16. to Tuesday, January 19. 1713.

The Mercator waits to hear the Opposers prove their new Assertion, (viz.) That we have a losing Trade to Spain.

If it could be proved, that We lose by our Trade to Spain, it would be an unanswerable Argument for Passing the Commerce-Bill.

The Particulars of that Inference explained.

Another Letter from Mr. Backstroke, with more Evidences quoted out of the Inspector-General.

An Account of Goods Exported to Spain in one Day, being the same Day they Printed their Assertion, that We lose Money by the Trade to Spain.

AS the *MERCATOR* is upon a Subject, that never was call'd in question before, (viz.) To Enquire, whether the Trade to Spain be to our Profit or no, he waits with some Impatience to know, what those People, who have advanc'd this Novelty in the World, will say towards a Proof of it; for hitherto they have done no more than affirm'd it, without entring upon Matter of Evidence or Explanation; and 'tis hoped, they do not expect, that we should take a thing of this nature upon Trust.

But while they are to be suppos'd busy in preparing their *SCHEME* for the Proof of the Injury and Loss, which we suffer by the Spanish Trade, the *MERCATOR* desires Leave to draw one Inference from the bare Assertion, which will be a strong Motive added to what has been said already for our speedily settling the French Trade.

One of the great Additions to our Return of Goods from Spain has been this, That the French Wines having been Prohibited, and a severe Duty still remaining upon them, almost equal to a Prohibition, we have been oblig'd to supply that Deficiency from Spain and Portugal.

Now if we take so many Goods off from the Spaniards, that it amounts to more, than they take off from us, and that we lose by this Trade also, paying the Balance in Money as they say we do, why then the high Duties on French Goods, so far as that Particular extends, are no Advantage to us, and do but drive us from one Losing Trade to another.

The *MERCATOR* desires to Explain this a little for the sake of some, who may not be so much Masters of the Affair of Trade as others.

Upon the Stop of the French-Wine Trade, our People presently suppose one of these two Things: 1. That either all is clear Gain to us, or (2.) That the Wine is wholly supply'd out of Portugal; which being allow'd to be a gainful Trade, *say they*, that which before was to our Loss, is now quite turned into a new Channel of Trade to our Advantage.

Now if all the Increase of the Importation of Wine in the room of French Wine was from Portugal, this

might seem to be true; but as they tell us, we formerly Imported 20000 Ton of Wine and 6000 Ton of Brandy a Year from France, will they pretend to say, that we ever Imported an encreas'd Quantity like that from Portugal? No, nothing like it; but an equal, if not a superior Quantity of Wines, has, at the same time, come in from Spain. It is true, the Quantity of Wine from Spain was usually more and greater than from Portugal; but we shall now view the Encrease only, as follows:

Usual Import of Wines from Spain before the War, as in 1687	_____	Tons. 3562
Usual Import of Wines from Spain during the War, particularly in the Year 1700	_____	12280
Usual Import of Wines from Portugal before the War, viz. in the Year 1687	_____	327
Usual Import of Wines from Portugal during the War, particularly in the Year 1700	_____	7657
Spanish Brandy Anno 1687	_____	23
Spanish Brandy 1700	_____	155
Portugal Brandy Anno 1687	_____	None
Portugal Brandy Anno 1700	_____	39

Encrease of either between the Times of War and Peace as follows; (viz.)

Encrease of the Wine from Portugal	_____	7330
Encrease of the Wine from Spain	_____	8718
Encrease of Brandy from Spain	_____	132
Encrease of Brandy from Portugal	_____	39

From



From hence it is obvious to any ones Understanding, that this Encrease of 8718 Ton of Wine per Annum, of our Importation of Wine from Spain, is occasioned by the stop of our Trade from France. Then, as these Men say, we lose by our Trade to Spain, and take more Goods from them than they take from us, and pay a Ballance to them in Money, then, so far our stopping the Trade to France is of no Advantage to us; tho' we were to grant, that we lost by the Trade to France, because so much of the Importation of Wine is but removed from one losing Trade to another losing Trade; and we are as to that Article, but just where we were.

If any Man question the Fact, and asks what particular Wines they are in Spain, which are thus Encreas'd, seeing the Canary Trade is visibly sunk above Two thirds of what it has been, and but little Sherry has been brought in of late, compared to what was formerly; He may have an Answer from every Vintner in the Quantity of Mountain-Malaga's for Whites; the Galitia's, Barcelona's, &c. for Red Wines, of which we formerly scarcely knew the Names.

Now to what purpose is all this Stir about the making the French Treaty Effectual? Is it only for about 6000 or 7000 Ton of Portugal Wine? Is that of such Value to us as to stop a Trade with a whole Nation! Besides, all the Wine is to be discounted out of that Quantity, which Portugal shall continue to bring in, after this Trade shall be settled, which is not likely to be much less than before, the Nation being come into a habit of Drinking strong Wines, and the principal abatement of Quantity is likely to be upon the Spanish Wines, which do not come so near to the French Wine as the Portugal Wines do; and many are of the Opinion, that we shall not Import a thousand Pipes of Wine a Year the less from Portugal, tho' the French Trade were settled; but of the Spanish Wine, most of the Encreas'd Quantity would abate, for Reasons of which, the *MERCATOR* may speak hereafter.

If then the opening the French Trade will principally affect our Importation of Wine from Spain, and the Spanish Trade is to our Loss, and drains us of our Money, as these People have publicly affirm'd; Then, pray where's the Damage of the French Treaty, supposing all you say of it were true? It is but buying that for Money in France, which, they say, we buy for Money now in Spain; and we get the Vent of all our own Goods into France in the Bargain.

So this Argument Turns against them, if it were True; and how fairly they will make it out to be True, that we shall see, when they please to make it publick.

To the Mercator.

I laid down a Fundamental in my last Letter but one, (viz.) That the French being the first, that laid on heavy Duties on the Trade between us and them; it is a good Argument to prove, that the Trade was not carried on to our Loss, as had been suggested.

It is my Business now to prove, that the French were the first, who began to lay Taxes on the Trade; and for this I must Cross-Examine, as I said before, their old Friend and Witness of their own Calling up, (viz.) the Inspector-General, as follows:

"Before the Year 1660, they had laid a Duty of 50 Sols per Ton upon English Shipping, and the aforementioned Report takes notice, the French King, Anno 1654, 1660, 1664, and 1667, had encreased the Duties on our Woollen Manufacture, our Lead, Tin, Coals, Tobacco, Sugar, Fish, and other Commodities, and restrained the Importation of our Woollen Goods to his Ports of Calais and Diepe, and other Commodities to some other inconvenient Ports; and in 1686 he laid high Impositions on all our East-

Goods sent thither, and restrained their Importation to select Ports. This we retaliated in 1660, by our Act for encouraging and encreasing Shipping and Navigation, which secures our Trade not only from the Encroachment of France, but of other Countries. There we lay 5s. upon their Tonnage, till they take off the 50 Sols upon ours. In 1668 we laid a new Imposition upon their Wines and Brandies for two Years; In 1670 new Duties were laid upon their Wines and Vinegar for eight Years; in 1667 an Act passed to prohibit French Wine, Vinegar, Brandy, Linnen-Cloth, Silks, Salt, Paper, &c. for three Years; in 1678 an additional Duty was laid upon all Wines, most of which Duties were continued to 1688.

Here it is plain, the French first tax'd our Shipping, and first tax'd our Trade: Is it probable then, that they would have done so, if they got a Million a Year by us? Could they be so weak as not to foresee, that this would put us upon Retaliation, and Taxing or Prohibiting their Goods, and so Rob them of that Gainful Ballance, by lessening the Consumption of their Goods among us, as laying Duties must necessarily do?

Again: Was it probable, we should never lay any Tax upon French Goods till they began it? Nor then, but very slowly and gradually, if we had found that we lost a Million a Year by the Importation of their Goods! It is a certain Sign, that the Nation had always other Notions of the Trade, since they were willing to leave it open, and spare it from Taxes as long as they could, even till the French, who we say were the Gainers, began it.

These things are all against Nature, against Reason, and against the Course of Things; they are not at all likely, and they strongly Argue, that the French Trade was not, as has been represented, a Million a Year, no, nor any thing at all to our Loss.

After the War had stopped a while, (viz.) from 1699, the Inspector-General gives an Account of the Ballance of the French Trade being on our Side; and, as he very well says, had not the French Duties on our Goods been laid before our Duties were laid on theirs, it must always have been so; and if ever it was otherwise, it must have been, because they being sensible, that we Gained greatly by our Trade with them, began with laying Duties upon the Trade, to prevent it: If we were the Losers, it was our Business to lay Duties, not theirs; and as we were the Gainers, it appeared, that it was their Business, and not ours. Let Mr. Martin Answer this fairly, if he can.

From the Custom-House.

Exported in One Day, (viz.) January 7. 1713. to Spain and the Streights; being the same Day, in which it was published, that we lose Money by our Trade to Spain.

300 Long Cloths
65 Short Cloths
152 Spanish Cloths
362 Double Bays
45 Minikin Bays
628 Perpets and Serges
2100 Stuffs and Says
785 doz. Hose
10 doz. Hats
172 Chairs
Certain Haberdashery, Lace, Silver and Gold Thread, Cabinets, wrought Iron, &c.



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